

# More Than 200 Widows of the War of 1812 Still Living

BY JOHN ELLIOTT WATKINS.

Surprised you will be to learn that although the War of 1812 was declared a century ago, ending next Tuesday, 239 widows of that conflict's veterans still live to enjoy pensions allowed by the government.

These old ladies, our nearest links to our second war with Great Britain, are now dying off at the rate of about one a week. At the time of the Spanish War there were 2,407 of them, and ten years ago they numbered 1,300. Five years ago 528. They have drawn pensions of \$12 per month since 1882. From 1878 until that year they had been allowed \$5. Several of the survivors' husbands have been killed when Congress declared war June 18, 1812. But needless to add more of them were widows during that war.

Five Officers' Widows.

Only five of these 239 are widows of commissioned officers. The remainder that fought to gain our final independence. Only one is the widow of an officer of the regular army, who served in that struggle of 1812-15.

This interesting lady is Mrs. Sally B. Davis, of 1224 Spruce street, Philadelphia. She is the widow of Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Boyer Davis, of Wilmington, who, after gallantly defending the town of Lewes, Del., against the British, fought with Andrew Jackson at New Orleans.

This quiet old town of Lewes, just across the bay from Cape May, was Colonel Davis' birthplace, and when the British squadron anchored off its shores in 1813 he was a middle-aged man of forty-seven, was in command of the militia.

When Admiral Boscawen, landing a flag of truce upon this beach, demanded twenty-five bullocks and a proportionate quantity of vegetables and hay for the British squadron, and offered to pay for these supplies, Colonel Davis replied: "We solemnly swear to commit total or partial treason to your command. The worst history further records how Boscawen replied, regretting the misery he would inflict on the women and children by a bombardment, and how the word came back to his flagship: "Colonel Davis is a brilliant officer, and has taken care of the militia. During the twenty-four hours of bombardment that followed the British ship sent 300 shot of from eighteen to twenty-two pounds into Lewes, but so quickly was the response of a battery pointed upon an eminence, and worked by Colonel Davis' militia, that the most dangerous of the enemy's gunboats was disabled and its cannon silenced. There were no lives lost to the little town, and the British squadron soon put out for Bermuda.

Commissioned by Madison.

In reward for this victory President Madison commissioned Davis a lieutenant-colonel of regulars, and late in 1812 he was transferred to the command of the One Hundred and Forty-fourth Infantry at New Orleans. Here, after aiding in Andrew Jackson's decisive victory, he remained at Fort Jackson until May, 1815. He stayed in Louisiana for nine years after the war and then lived in Philadelphia for a decade, until 1824, when he moved to a country place near Wilmington, where he lived until he answered the last roll call in 1874.

The diamond anniversary of his wedding with the present Mrs. Davis, his second wife, falls within the present year. When they were married at Wilmington in 1817, just seventy-five years ago, she was Miss Sally Janet Jones, although after her marriage she adopted the middle name, Boyer. They had five children, and he lived to be ninety.

His widow's ninety-sixth birthday falls this month, and when I inquired of her son as to her health the other day he told me that it was "good." Her husband having been born in 1748—ten years before independence was declared—her two lives have thus far spanned 116 years. She has been a widow for fifty-eight years, living all but two of which she has resided in Philadelphia.

Two Lieutenant's Relics.

Next in order of their husbands' ranks are two widows of War of 1812 lieutenants, both of the militia. The younger, Mrs. Catherine Lowman Sandridge, of Agee, Va., celebrates her eighty-second birthday this year. Her husband, Anderson Sandridge, was first lieutenant of a company of the Eighth Virginia Volunteers, organizing in America for the defense of his country against the British. He was honorably discharged at Camp Carter in 1815, and Mrs. Sandridge was married to him forty years later, Christmas Day, 1855. In less than three years and a half he died, so she has been a widow for fifty-three years. Her home at Agee is in the Blue Ridge mountains, a few miles east of Lexington.

The Old Dominion State is the home also of Mrs. Lucy Ann Fraser Kilgore, of the village of Peters. She is the widow of Lieutenant Hiram Kilgore, who volunteered at Russell Courthouse in 1812, and, after serving in the artillery, was discharged at Norfolk the following year. He was born 121 years



MRS. ANDERSON SANDRIDGE.

ago, and when they were married, in 1868, he was seventy-seven and she was forty. She has been a widow twenty-five years. Her eighty-fourth birthday falls within this centennial year of the beginning of the war in which her husband served.

Her Rare Distinction.

A rare distinction enjoyed by Mrs. Mary Ann Moore, of Vincennes, Ind., is that of being not only the widow of an 1812 officer, but a "Real Daughter" of the Revolution. Her father, John Caldwell, aided in the first stroke for liberty under Washington, and her husband, John Moore, helped put the finishing stroke upon our independence a generation later.

Moore was already a veteran when the War of 1812 opened, for he had volunteered as a private of the Indiana militia in the summer of 1811, for the Indian War of that year, during which he was promoted to the rank of corporal. Then when the second war with the mother country broke out he offered his services as a private of the Indiana Mounted Riflemen, or "Rangers," in the same year, 1812.

He was elected ensign of a company of the First Indiana Regiment. The present Mrs. Moore was his third wife. She married him in old Vincennes, sixty-six years ago, when he was thirty-nine and she was a lass of only "sweet sixteen." His two previous weddings having been solemnized, respectively, twenty-six and sixteen years previously. She lived with him for nearly nineteen years, and has been his widow since the third year of the Civil War. Her eighty-second birthday occurs this year, her husband having first volunteered his services for his country nearly a decade before she was born.

Another widow of an ensign of the second war with the mother country is Mrs. Mary Trader Stephens, of Fairmont, W. Va. She was born ninety years ago, and was twenty-four when, in Marshall county, W. Va., she married Ensign Silas Stephens, who had enlisted in Captain James Morgan's company of the Virginia militia in the summer of 1812. They were married in the second year of the Mexican War, just sixty-five years ago next August, and lived together for twenty-two years, or until his death in 1888.

Only Two Left.

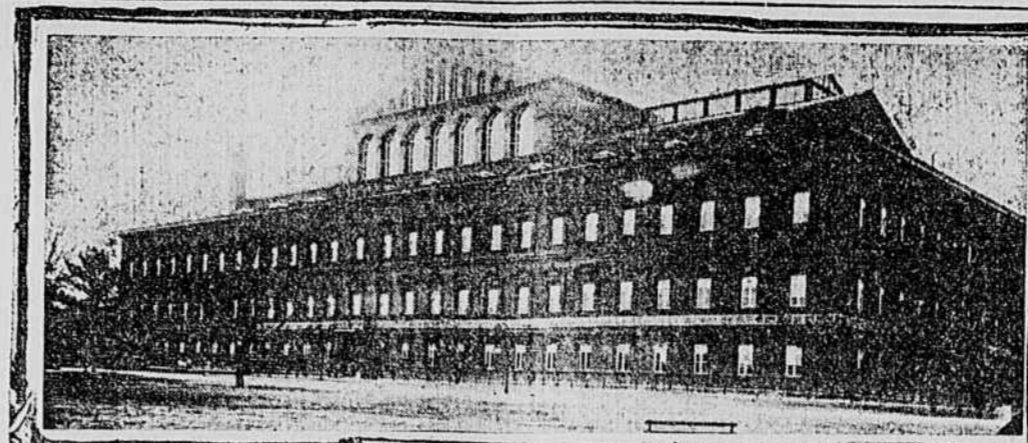
Only two widows of naval officers survive to see the centenary of the war in which their husbands served their country, and both of these ladies are relics of young midshipmen of that series of brilliant sea victories.

I visited one of these ladies the other day—Mrs. Adams Foster, of 2207 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington. She presented me with two buttons from the uniform her husband wore while serving as clerk to Commodore Rogers, on board the frigate President, in 1812-14. He was a son of Captain James Foster, a cotton manufacturer of Danvers, Mass., and was a boy in his teens when the War of 1812 broke out. In later life he made a fortune in the coal business in Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Foster, who was Miss Sarah Jane Burch, married the veteran at Washington before the Civil War and they lived in New Haven and Baltimore until the time of his death. Their son, Dr. Romulus A. Foster, is a major in the Medical Corps, District of Columbia National Guard.

Midshipman on "Old Ironsides."

At Cambridge, Mass., resides Mrs. Annie K. Stearns, widow of John Stearns, who volunteered for service under Captain Charles Stewart on that most renowned vessel of our navy, the frigate Constitution ("Old Ironsides"), in August, 1813. The following summer President Madison rewarded the young man's gallantry with a commission as midshipman, which he held until late in 1817. Although Stearns volunteered until after "Old Ironsides" came ashore, with the Guerriere, he saw plenty of excitement during her many later engagements along our coast. After leaving the navy he was in business in Salem and Cambridge. He married the present Mrs. Stearns, his second wife, in 1840.



UNITED STATES PENSION OFFICE. Repository of records of 1812 veterans.

she having been Miss Annie K. Wilson. She has survived him for thirty-six years.

While I was making notes concerning the "1812 widows" at the pension office the other day a big rubber stamp marked the word "dead" upon the jacket containing the papers of one of them, Mrs. Samuel Thackara, of Haddonfield, N. J., widow of a private of militia. She had lived to be nearly 102 when, May 2, she joined her husband in the realm which no war disturbs.

Of the 239 1812 widows still surviving her, she whose husband survived the longest after that conflict is Mrs. Emma M. Gardinere, of Dayton, Tenn. Her husband, George W., of that name, was private in a Tennessee regiment, and as late as October, 1899, was reported as living at the age of 71 years 3 months.

The Last Survivor.

He was not, however, the last survivor of the War of 1812. This honor was lately claimed for a patriarch who died early this year, and whose going was widely proclaimed in the following newspaper dispatch:

"Veteran of 1812 Dead.

"Columbia, Ky., February 23.—Uncle Johnny Morg, said to be 124 years old, and the oldest man in the United States, was found dead in his log cabin home on Indian Creek, near here, yesterday. He was a veteran of the War of 1812, and more than half a century ago was reputed to be one of the best boxers in the South. He had no relatives.

"Uncle Johnny was born in Germany and came to this country 100 years ago, settling at once in the army. He knew many noted men, among them President Jackson and Tecumseh, the Indian chief."

Assured that this man was a pensioner if a veteran, I investigated the records of the pension office, and after failing to find any one of the name giving satisfaction myself that he was the person who has for years been carried on the rolls as John Morg, alias "Moor," born in Hesse, Germany, and whose last recorded address was given four years ago as the "Villa known as Seventy-Six, in Clinton county, Ky. He died February 18, 1812, or five days previous to the date of the dispatch quoted.

What the Record Shows.

This man was not, however, a veteran of the War of 1812. His papers show that he was born in 1788, at Buffalo, N. Y., and enlisted in Company C, Eighth United States Infantry, and that after serving in the Indian wars he was discharged in 1841. He was not, moreover, anywhere near the unbelievable age given in the dispatch quoted in the original enlistment papers he declared himself as twenty-one years old in 1838, which would mean that he was born in 1817—two years after the close of the War of 1812—and was therefore ninety-five at the time of his death, this year. In his pension declaration "filed in 1893 he gave his age at the time of enlistment as twenty-six instead of twenty-one, as stated in the original papers, filed fifty-five years previously. If his last statement was true he was 100



MRS. ADAMS FOSTER.

years old at the time of his death. At any rate, he was married as late as 1839, when, according to his previous admissions, he must have been either seventy-two or seventy-seven years old.

The last survivor of the War of 1812, according to the evidence gathered by both the pension bureau and the Society of the War of 1812, was Hiram Cronk, who lived until seven years ago. He was born April 29, 1800, and enlisted in the War of 1812 with his father—a Revolutionary veteran—and two brothers. The date and place of his enlistment were August 4, 1814, at Western, N. Y.

He was then a lad of fourteen, and most of his service was in camp near Lake Ontario, before his first discharge. The first night on which he was out of the service he spent at Watertown, N. Y., where he heard the commanding at Sackett's Harbor. He returned home and re-enlisted as a private. After the war he learned the shoemaker's trade, married Mary Thornton, of Western, in 1825, and cleared for himself a farm at Ava, N. Y., where he settled down for the remainder of his life. He and his spouse lived together sixty years and had seven children.

The Last Seven.

Fifteen years ago he was not such a conspicuous figure as later, there then being alive six other survivors of the second war with Great Britain. Elijah Glenn, Newark, N. J.; Eleazer Smith, Danbury, N. H.; Hosea Brown, Grants Pass, Ore.; James Hooper, Baltimore; John Livingston, also of Baltimore; and Isaiah Sexton, of Sparta, Mich.

Of these, who, with Hiram Cronk, formed the "old guard," the last seven veterans of the great war, Brown was then (1897) upon the pension records as 105, and both Glenn and Smith as 101. Three of them—Hooper, Livingston and Sexton—were all in their early nineties, while Cronk was already far advanced in the ninth decade of his life.

The price for the glory of being the



HIRAM CRONK, Last survivor of War of 1812.

last survivor was between these four, and Cronk was an easy winner, for all of the three younger men died before the battle of Manila Bay, in 1898, leaving Cronk, now ninety-eight, in the race against his elders, Glenn and Smith, both 102. And before another year was out both of these centenarians fell by the wayside, giving Cronk, the laurels, which he wore undisputed for the next six years.

His honors came quick and fast. New York State granted him a special pension of \$72 a month, in addition to that already allowed by the Federal government. The Empire State Board of Aidmen, New York City, survivors of the Revolution, Daniel Bakeman (who died at 102 1/2 years, in 1889) had also been one of her sons. After Hiram Cronk passed his one hundred and fourth milestone the Board of Aidmen, New York City, anticipating his death at any moment, resolved that his remains should lie in state in the City Hall.

A Modern Methuselah.

But this modern Methuselah was not yet ready to be mustered out. On his one hundred and fifth birthday, however, when visited by a delegation of the Society of the War of 1812, which came to deliver addresses and install him as an honorary member, he realized little or nothing of the honors paid him, and gave no attention to his guests.

For days he had been sleeping the greater part of the time, and while awake had been apparently oblivious to what had occurred about him. Moreover, he had grown very deaf, and partly on that account was unable to carry on a conversation. Yet he was physically strong, and could get in and out of his bed with little difficulty.

At 6 upon a May morning, just a fortnight after his installation into the society, he passed on, leaving upon this side of the great divide four children ranking in ages from sixty-six to eighty-one, also four of his grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Clad in the uniform of the Veteran Corps of Artillery of the War of 1812,



ADMIRAL DEWEY.

A grandson of the War of 1812.

his remains were borne to New York city in a casket draped in a battle flag of that conflict. A special train carried the funeral party, and regulars from Governors Island, together with other military organizations, escorted the body to the City Hall, where, during the first afternoon they lay in state, 56,000 people filed past the catafalque to view the features of our last soldier of our final struggle for independence. Next day a funeral procession, unequaled save by that which participated in the obsequies of General Grant, escorted the grizzled corpse to its final resting place in Cypress Hill Cemetery.

Reached Age of 110.

Remarkable were the ages which (if we can believe the records of the War of 1812 Society) the last fifty veterans of that struggle attained. In the minutes of the society's list contained names of thirty-four who had passed the 100-year mark, one of whom was alleged to be 110, one 108; three, 105; four, 104, and four 104. According to these records, the honor of having attained the greatest age (110) fell to William Jack Haines, of St. Louis, a veteran of the battle of New Orleans.

The last survivor among the officers of this war was, according to the same society's records, Ensign Dyer Pierce, of Belvidere, Ill. The date of his death does not appear on the records, but he was alleged to be 105 years and 3 months old when last heard from.

It may interest you also to learn what the blood of the great heroes of 1812-15 is achieving to-day. The great victor of Lake Erie, Oliver Hazard Perry's grandson, Thomas Scott Perry, is a distinguished Boston author and member of the National Institute of Art and Letters. He is, on the maternal side, a great-great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin. Commodore Porter's great-grandson, David D. Porter, is a major of marines. General William Henry Harrison's great-grandson, Russell B., was inspector-general of volunteers in the war with Spain, and is now practicing law in Indianapolis.

The blood of two other famous warriors of 1812-15 helped with the Spanish War. These were Major-General Joe Wheeler, U. S. A., the grandson of General William Hull, and General Alexander Macomb's great-grandson, Captain Alexander Macomb Wetherall, U. S. A., who was killed at the battle of Santiago. Admiral Dewey, too, is

proud of the fact that he is the grandson of a War of 1812 veteran—Captain Simeon Dewey, of Vermont (Copyright, 1912, by John Ellreth Watkins.)

## WILMINGTON

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Wilmington, N. C., June 15.—One of the notable social events of the week was the observance by Mr. and Mrs. J. H. W. Bonitz of the fiftieth anniversary of their wedding day, and the celebration was a most elaborate one. All day Monday the old couple, who are greatly admired and loved by an array of friends, held open house. The Bonitz home, on Market Street, was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and there a large number of friends went to shower congratulations upon the couple. An interesting feature of the celebration was a special service Sunday at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, when Mr. and Mrs. Bonitz sealed again the wedding vows they had spoken fifty years ago. Twenty-eight descendants witnessed the interesting and impressive service. Among the many out-of-the-city folks present at the observance was Mr. Bonitz's only sister, Mrs. Emily Hahn, of Lynchburg, Va.

An interesting marriage of the week was that of Miss Bertha Wicks and Thomas Fry, of Florence, S. C. The wedding took place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy LeGwyn, and the ceremony was performed by Rev. A. D. McClure, pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The wedding was a quiet affair, due to the recent death of the bride's father. Mr. and Mrs. Fry will reside in Florence, returning there from an extensive bridal tour North.

Bradford Reynolds has as his guests his mother, Mrs. Reynolds, and sister, Miss Margaret Reynolds, of Portsmouth, Va. He is entertaining them at Wrightsville Beach.

J. M. Royall, of Richmond, was among the guests at this seashore resort the present week.

A number of delightful entertainments were given this week at Wrightsville Beach, but none of a more charming or enjoyable nature than a bridge whist party by Mrs. Charles N. Evans at the handsome Evans cottage. The prize was won by Mrs. Jesse Couch, the second by Mrs. Walter Williamson, while Mrs. Percy Albright captured the booty award.

The ragtime dances, such as the "turkey trot," "bunny hug" and "grizzly bear," have been given the "kick" at Wrightsville Beach. The big dance pavilion, Luning, has put its seal of disapproval on these dances, and the conductor of the orchestra has been given strong directions to keep his eye skinned for any dancers who try to trip such flip tapers or steps. So far only the "turkey trot" has been in evidence, two or three couples trying to pull off this stunt, but the conductor observed them, and the music stopped with a jarring suddenness for the time being.

## BERKELEY SPRINGS

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Berkeley Springs, W. Va., June 15.—With the opening of the season at Berkeley, the host and cottages are well filled with guests. The weather though rather cool for a week past, has been very enjoyable to the lovers of mountain climbing and horseback riding. Fishing, too, at Great Cacapon, on the Potomac, has been quite the fad.

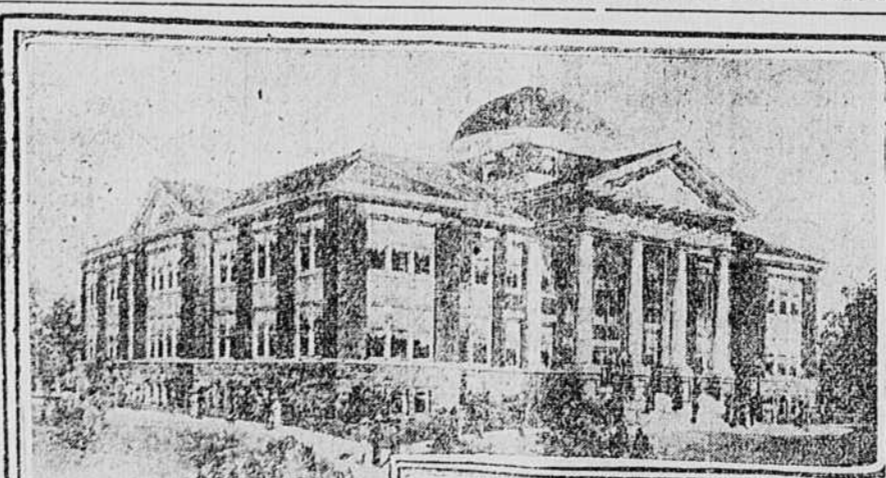
Guests who recently registered at the "Washington," include Mrs. Chas. W. Stow, Mrs. John Wilson, Mrs. Mallory, Frank Campbell, C. M. Marriott, Jno. P. Calhoun, D. D. Davis, of Baltimore; Mrs. E. W. Van Metre, and daughter, Major and Mrs. Geo. Foot, U. S. A.; Mrs. and Miss Emma Dent Casey, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Marriott, from Washington; Mr. C. Groves and wife, F. L. Hodgson, Mr. and Mrs. John Hotel and daughter, Martinsburg, W. Va.; G. H. Warren, Frederickburg; F. C. Smith, York, Pa.; Frank D. Owens, Detroit; Henry Shriver and family, Cumberland, Md.

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Perlin, who have occupied the Kennedy cottage for some months past, have returned to the home in New Jersey.

Mrs. E. C. Breese, who returned to her cottage, "Woodside," after a brief visit to Washington.

The week at the hotel closed with a concert given by the young ladies' orchestra, of Berkeley, in commitment to the guests, and was largely attended.

## RADFORD NORMAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS

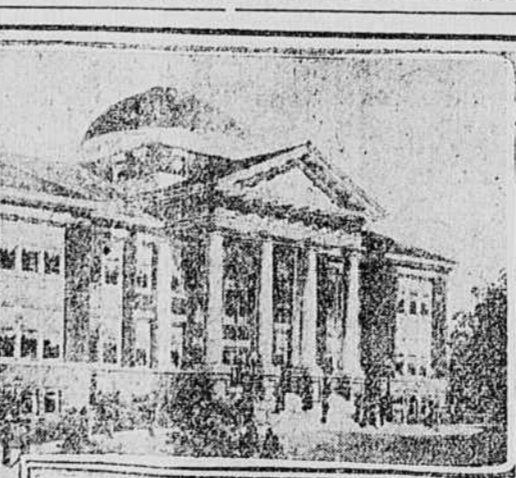


Administration Building State Normal and Industrial School for Women, Bedford, Va.

Radford, Va., June 15.—Radford is being blessed with an educational center in Virginia. She is looking forward eagerly to the completion of the first two buildings for her State Normal School.

The pictures shown above were made from the architect's drawings. One shows a bird's-eye view of the new tract of about thirty odd acres, which the city gave to the State for the school, and the plan contemplating the school group to be when complete. Another shows the administration building, an imposing edifice with

columns, elevations for which have been completed, while contracts are about to be made for construction. The third and fourth one of the proposed campus, of which there are to be six or eight. Pending the completion of the new dormitories, the students have been housed for the use of the buildings in the city, on a

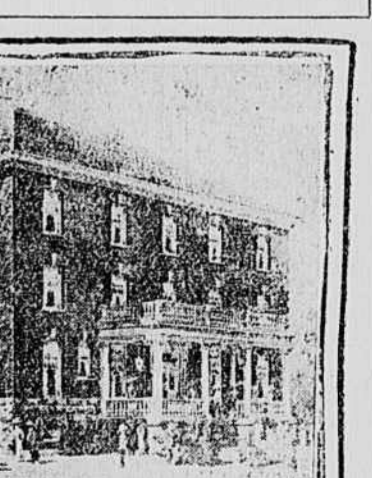


Dormitory Building State Normal and Industrial School for Women, Bedford, Va.

cent ground which will be completely surrounded and painted. The entire group of buildings, as contemplated, will cost about \$300,000. The administration building will

have a frontage of 138 feet and a depth of 137 feet, and be three stories, including basement, which will show eight feet above ground. The building will be very imposing with its

dome and classic portico, standing on an eminence and fronted by a grove of enormous trees. It will be of brick, stone, and red sandstone or native limestone. It will contain the



Dormitory Building State Normal and Industrial School for Women, Bedford, Va.

offices and auditorium seating some 600, and class-rooms; and in the basement a symposium, with swimming pool, ventilation, heating, lighting, water supply and all conveniences will be of best modern design, and buildings will be fireproof. The first dormitory to be erected will have a rooming capacity for 200 students.

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Ladies' Velvet Pumps, \$3 and \$3.50 values; Monday only... 95c

Ladies' White Canvas Pumps, the \$1.50 95c

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